



inTouch

January 2006

Volume Twelve - Number One

Services for Seniors

Medicare Drug Plan Information

For senior citizens and those who provide care for seniors, there is no better place to live than in Montgomery County. Regardless of interests or needs, Montgomery County has programs and services to fit everyone. Active seniors can find a variety of programs to stay healthy and fit at local senior centers. Frail seniors can choose from hundreds of services to help them stay in their homes, from home health aides to assistive technology. Seniors who choose to move to retirement housing will find over 150 facilities/communities to choose from. Low income seniors can find many programs that provide help at no cost or on a sliding income scale. Aging and Disability Services, part of Montgomery County's Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), provides many of these free or reduced priced services to several thousand seniors and their families.

So many choices can be overwhelming. Residents can call HHS's Aging and Disability Services Senior Infoline at (240) 777-3000 to start the process. Trained Information Specialists will provide assistance on what questions to ask and help on finding appropriate programs and services. If necessary, the Information Specialist can go to the senior's home to explain these services and assist with completing application forms. Our Specialists are knowledgeable about federal, state and county programs, including the many programs operated by our non-profit partners. A list of just some of these programs includes:

- Medicare, Medicaid and Long Term Care Insurance
- Food stamps and other income support programs
- Adult Protective Services
- Respite and Home Health/Personal Care
- Telephone Reassurance for Caregivers
- Transportation services such as Call'N'Ride
- Assisted Living and Retirement Housing
- Congregate and Home Delivered Meals
- Nursing Home and Assisted Living Ombudsman

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Tribute to Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.

County Executive Douglas M. Duncan, in partnership with the Town of Garrett Park and the cities of Gaithersburg and Takoma Park, will host a tribute and community service event to honor the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

On Monday, January 16, 2006, Montgomery County joins the nation in honoring the memory of Rev. King by sponsoring events under the theme "To Form a More Perfect Union," a phrase borrowed from the opening sentence of the Preamble of the United States Constitution. The tribute, honoring the 76th anniversary of Rev. King's January 15, 1929 birth, starts at 12:30 p.m. with service projects sponsored by the County Executive's Volunteer Center.

Students, individuals, families, faith groups and community organizations are invited to participate in any one of approximately 20 projects. They include packing 1,500 lunches to help feed families who face homelessness in our community. Another project allows participants to make greeting cards and send a reminder of home to military personnel stationed overseas as part of Operation USO. USO, or the United Service Organizations, was formed before World War II to provide comfort to troops and their families and to help boost morale, especially for those stationed in combat areas. Participants can also help make dolls for Interages, a Wheaton organization that builds bridges across generations and cultures.

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Message from the County Executive



DOUGLAS M. DUNCAN

Dear Friends,

In December, I delivered my 11th and final State of the County address. During the past 11 years, we have traveled an amazing and rewarding journey together as each year brought its own unique set of challenges and triumphs.

Our school system, the largest and most diverse in Maryland, continues to be among the best in the country. SAT scores were the highest in the state's history and the graduation rate has reached over 90 percent. We are ranked in the top three percent of all school systems in the country. Despite our excellence in education, there is always room for improvement. We are putting an emphasis on reducing class size and funding all-day kindergarten. Our goal is to have every student read at grade level and to increase participation in advanced placement courses. In my upcoming budget, I plan to fully fund our public school system, including their construction.

I am proud to announce that Montgomery County is the largest source of jobs in Maryland. Since 1994, we have provided over 85,000 positions, a 20 percent increase. Our unemployment rate is one of the lowest in the state. We will strive to continue and improve this trend.

The environment is a top priority for me and I intend to preserve our county's nature preserves and resources. We have already protected over 61,000 acres of farmland, surpassing any county in the nation. Our efforts have restored over 40 miles of streams and are ensuring the safety of our well water. We support clean air initiatives, such as using Ride-On buses that run on natural gas and promoting wind energy use. We also advocate using solar power. Our Recycling Center has already received two awards. I will continue to stress the importance of a cleaner and healthier environment.

All Montgomery County residents deserve to feel safe in our neighborhoods. The crime rate is low, but I aim for even lower incidents of violence. Crime has already decreased by 12 percent over the past decade, but we will put even more police officers on the streets and in our schools next year. We are moving forward with gang prevention initiatives to provide healthy and constructive activities for our youth during the after school hours. Montgomery County is also working to make residents more aware of safety on the roads and what we all can do to prevent injuries and fatalities.

In my final year of office, I will build on the solid foundation we have established over the past 11 years and continue to cement our reputation as one of the finest places in Maryland and in the nation to live, work, grow a business and raise a family.

I wish you all a happy and successful new year!

Sincerely,

Douglas M. Duncan, County Executive

Douglas M. Duncan, County Executive
Bruce Romer, Chief Administrative Officer
Parker Hamilton, Assistant CAO

Office of Community Outreach:

Debbie Resnick, Manager

Shu-Ping Chan, Asian Pacific American Liaison

Tina Clarke, African American/Black Liaison

Joe Heiney-Gonzalez, Latino/Hispanic Liaison

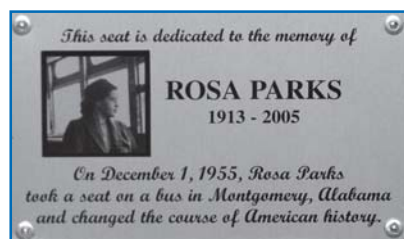
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Submissions, comments and event announcements can be emailed to: InTouch@montgomerycountymd.gov. Those received by the first of March, June, September or December will be considered for the next issue of *In Touch*. Articles may be reproduced or translated into other languages with attribution.

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Lasting Tribute to Rosa Parks



In a tribute to the memory of Rosa Parks, Montgomery County Executive Douglas M. Duncan announced that the first forward-facing seat behind the driver

on each of Montgomery County's Ride On buses will now feature a plaque with the words "This Seat is dedicated to the Memory of Rosa Parks." The plaques will be in place as a permanent and lasting tribute to the civil right pioneer, regarded as the "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement." Mrs. Parks came to Montgomery County for the dedication of the Rosa M. Parks Middle School in Olney. She died on October 24, 2005 at the age of 92.

At the bus dedication ceremony the County Executive said "This is a fitting tribute to a courageous woman who took a stand against racial injustice and changed the course of American history. A giant of the civil rights movement has passed, but her impact on equal justice under the law will live on forever."

Key Appointments Made

Parker Hamilton was appointed by County Executive Douglas M. Duncan and confirmed by the County Council as the new Director of Public Libraries. Parker remains in the capacity of Assistant Chief Administrative Officer in the Offices of the County Executive until her successor is named. We wish Parker the best as she takes on this exciting new challenge.

The County Executive also appointed **Luis Cardona** as the County's Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator, a key position recommended by Mr. Duncan's Gang Prevention Task Force, which began its work in February 2004. Luis comes to the County with many years of experience in gang prevention work on the national, state and local levels. For more information, call the gang prevention hotline at (240) 777-1245.

In addition, **Elizabeth Ortega-Lohmeyer** was appointed the new Director for the Charles W. Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity. With wide experience in working with diverse communities, Elizabeth is committed to sustaining the highest level of customer service to all residents, especially in meeting the unique needs of recent immigrants. Call (240) 777-4940 for more information about services at the Gilchrist Center, which is located at 11319 Elkin Street in Wheaton, right off University Boulevard and is accessible by public transportation.

Energy Assistance Benefits Available to Residents

County Executive Douglas M. Duncan has outlined a plan to expand Montgomery County's efforts to help low income residents pay for home heating costs by doubling the energy tax rebate program and expanding the County's Earned Income Tax Credit program, the nation's first local EITC.

The plan would double the energy tax rebate amount, currently \$40, to further assist eligible Montgomery County households in paying their home heating bills. The plan also calls for an additional \$50 credit under the County's Earned Income Tax Credit program. A total of about \$1.3 million in local funds is available to assist County residents.

"No one should have to choose between heating their homes and feeding their families," said the Executive. "My plan is designed to help seniors and others living on limited incomes pay their home heating bills this winter."

"Everyday, someone – a single mother, a disabled adult or a grandmother – facing a financial crisis calls our office asking for help to pay an overdue electric or gas bill," said Rev. Rosetta Robinson, Director of Congregation and Community Support Programs at Community Ministry of Montgomery County. "We know they are living in the hard place of having to decide whether to use their limited dollars to pay the utility bill to keep the lights on or to pay the rent to keep their housing."

Call (240) 777-4450 for more information about the County's energy assistance programs, which includes the Maryland Energy Assistance Program and the Electric Universal Service Program, as well as the Weatherization Program, which provides energy services to make a home more fuel efficient, and the Utility Service Protection Program, which protects households from utility disconnections by setting up a monthly payment plan.

Applications are available at the Department of Health and Human Services at 1301 Piccard Drive in Rockville or the Department's sites at the Upcounty Regional Services Center, 12900 Middlebrook Road in Germantown and the Silver Spring Regional Services Center, 8818 Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring.

Office of Community Outreach

Recognizing that good government depends on input from all residents, County Executive Douglas M. Duncan has placed community outreach as a primary focus in his administration. In fact, the Office of Community Outreach (OCO) is housed and located right in the Offices of the County Executive and plays an integral part in advising, informing and updating the Executive and senior staff on issues pertaining to all communities in Montgomery County. As an example, OCO has recently worked with a number of groups to learn about their missions and to provide suggestions to enhance the capabilities and networks of these organizations.

MIRECS, or Migrant and Refugee Cultural Support, Inc., is dedicated to helping immigrants and refugees become acculturated, learn English and access resources. The focus of MIRECS is to raise awareness and provide assistance to victims of torture, domestic violence, human trafficking and forced servitude. OCO has supported the work of MIRECS, which has sponsored seminars and workshops in County facilities. MIRECS can be reached at (301) 495-3733 or mirecs@aol.com.

OCO also met recently with the National Capital Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) to assist in efforts to bring scouting to more diverse communities. OCO is also working with BSA to link the scouts to schools, service agencies, houses of worship and nonprofit organizations which could benefit from the abundant pool of young volunteers that BSA provides. The National Capital Area Council can be reached at (301) 530-9360 or www.boyscouts-ncac.org.

SHIP, or the Senior Health Insurance Assistance Program, provides free information on Medicare, supplemental insurance, long term care insurance and similar services. SHIP is Montgomery County's partner in providing information on the new Medicare prescription drug plan, or Medicare Part D. SHIP can be contacted at (301) 590-2819 or www.medicarehelp.org.

GROWS, or the Grass Roots Organization for the Wellbeing of Seniors, is a coalition of organizations and individuals working to maintain dignity and independence for seniors, especially those who are frail or at-risk. OCO has worked with GROWS on its annual networking extravaganza that brings together organizations, individuals and service providers to learn about each other and develop partnership opportunities. GROWS has also developed multilingual information, including the Spanish version of the *Seniors' Resource Guide*. GROWS can be reached at (301) 765-3325 or www.growsmc.org.

The Washington Region for Justice and Inclusion works to promote the values of equality, understanding and respect for all communities. WRJI fights oppression, prejudice and discrimination by holding

seminars and training programs to help educate all communities about methods to work and live in peaceful and respectful coexistence. OCO and Montgomery County's Equal Employment Opportunity office are working with WRJI to develop training for employees and community members. WRJI can be reached at (301) 650-2436 or www.openingminds.org.

Groups interested in working with the County Executive's Office of Community Outreach can call (240) 777-2500.

Google Search Engine Powers Website

Montgomery County has made it even easier to use its website by adopting a Google search capability to locate information. Specifically, the County is now using the Google Mini Search Engine, the popular, cost effective and accurate tool that can quickly search and locate documents from commonly used keywords.

To find information using the new search capability, visit the County's website at www.montgomerycountymd.gov. The search box is at the homepage's upper left corner. By typing one or more keywords, a list of documents with online links to related information is generated.

King Tribute from page 1

The Volunteer Center provides these and many other interesting and rewarding opportunities not only during the tribute to Rev. King, but everyday of the year. By remembering his work and serving as volunteers, participants help fulfill Rev. King's vision of a nation committed to justice, freedom, equal opportunity and service to community.

The 3 p.m. program features keynote speaker Rev. Dr. Sandye A. Wilson, Senior Pastor of the St. Andrew and Holy Communion Episcopal Church in South Orange, NJ. A native of Baltimore, Rev. Wilson has a distinguished career in business, journalism and theology. A dynamic speaker, Rev. Wilson served as a delegate to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Woman and has taught at universities across the country. The program includes presentations of the Children of the Dream Awards and Humanitarian Awards to this year's recipients.

All events are at no cost and open to the public. Those attending are encouraged to donate a nonperishable food item to support a needy family. Events take place at the Bethesda North Marriott Hotel and Conference Center, 5701 Marinelli Road, North Bethesda, across from White Flint Metro station. The facility is wheelchair accessible. Sign language interpretation provided. For program information, call Christina Clarke at (240) 777-2523. For service project information, call the Volunteer Center at (240) 777-2600.

Flu Prevention

The flu season for 2005-2006 is expected to peak in early 2006. Public health officials still recommend flu shots for residents. It is not too late. In addition, Montgomery County's Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) strongly advises residents to take simple prevention measures to avoid flu and other diseases. Following these simple health habits will reduce the possibility of catching the flu.

- Use tissues to cover coughs and sneezes, and discard the tissues immediately.
- Wash hands often during the day, with each wash lasting at least 15-20 seconds. Scrub vigorously with soap and rinse surrounding areas, including the space between fingers and nails, as well as the wrists and back of hands. If using public facilities, turn off faucets with paper towels.
- Stay home from work or school if flu symptoms develop. Children are urged to avoid school if they have an oral temperature of more than 100 degrees, are vomiting or have a persistent cough, pale face, diarrhea, sore throat, earache, skin infection, stomach ache or reddened eyes. It is also vital to provide schools with updated contact information so parents can be reached if a child develops an illness at school.
- The flu can develop from a nuisance into serious complications, and can possibly lead to death. About 35,000 persons die every year during the normal flu season.

Should the Asian bird flu or other novel flu strain ever arrive in Montgomery County, HHS will advise residents of steps to take through local media. For those signed up through Alert Montgomery, advisories will be sent to designated text pagers, cell phones, email addresses (work or home) and/or wireless personal data assistant (PDA) machines such as a Blackberry. The County sends personal advisories to help prepare residents for emergency situations, which would include a possible Asian bird flu outbreak. All residents are strongly urged to sign up for this free advisory service at <http://alert.montgomerycountymd.gov>.

In the event of an outbreak of a novel strain of flu, such as the Asian bird flu, it may take several months for drug companies to develop a vaccine. The Asian bird flu is caused by viruses that infect mostly birds. Humans in Asia who caught the virus did so as a result of direct contact with infected chickens. At this time, there has not been any sustained human-to-human transmission of the Asian bird flu virus in the world.

For more information about availability of flu vaccine, call the Department of Health and Human Services vaccine hotline at 240-777-1050 or visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov.

Grants Update

County Executive Douglas M. Duncan is currently working with executive branch departments and agencies on community grants in preparation for the Fiscal Year 2007 budget presentation to the County Council.

Recently, the County Council passed a resolution that provides community organizations a more formal process to apply for grants to support activities that provide health and human services and community development. Although the Council is not placing limits on the types of community activities or on funding amounts, it will be focusing on providing grants to groups that address the needs of those in our community who are least able to assist themselves.

Applications are available on the website www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council or by calling (240) 777-7901. Applications are also available at Legislative Information Services in the Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Avenue in Rockville.

All applications are due and must be date stamped in the Council office by 12:00 Noon on February 15, 2006. Applications can be submitted to council.grants@montgomerycountymd.gov or delivered by mail or by hand to: Ms. Debbie Allnutt, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850.

For organizations applying for any of the executive branch grants — Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Community Service Grant (CSG) or Community Empowerment Grant (CEG) — and are not recommended for full funding, a new application is not required to receive consideration for Council grants. Organizations that already submitted a CDBG, CSG or CEG application must contact Ms. Allnutt at (240) 777-7820 by February 15, 2006 so Council staff can include the earlier application with the Council grant applications.

The Council will host a workshop for community organizations to ask questions about the grants process. The workshop takes place on Tuesday, January 10, 2006 from 7:30 to 9:00 PM in the Third Floor Hearing Room of the Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville. Council members, including President George Leventhal, will be available to address issues and answer questions. For more information, call Debbie Allnutt at (240) 777-7820.

PROFILE: **Lisa Lee** of Upcounty Regional Center

With the exciting new developments at the Germantown Town Center and other parts of Upcounty, residents can take advantage of the many shops, restaurants, theaters, athletic facilities and cultural activities in the area and still be just minutes away from home. The County's new indoor swim center just opened, BlackRock Center for the Arts continues to be a cultural jewel, Montgomery College is expanding its biotech center and a new library will be in service in late summer — all in the Upcounty area.

Right in the middle of these developments is the staff of the Upcounty Regional Services Center, headed by Center Director Cathy Matthews. It is the Center's role to stay abreast of the people, places and issues in the Upcounty area and work with other departments, agencies and community groups to solve problems. Lisa Lee, a staff member at the Center for the past five years and a Germantown resident, frequently takes advantage of all that Upcounty has to offer.

The service area of the Upcounty Center covers almost half the geographic area of Montgomery County and includes approximately 300,000 residents. Upcounty is witnessing growth both in numbers and in diversity. Recent immigrants, particularly those from Latin American, African and Asian countries, are blending in with the more established communities in the area, with some families of African or European ancestry having centuries-old roots in Montgomery County.

As part of good customer service, four satellite offices have been established with set service hours on specific days of the week in the Damascus, Gaithersburg, Poolesville and Quince Orchard library branches. To better serve residents, the Upcounty Service Center's staff focuses on specific communities in its large service area. Lisa's area of focus is Damascus, Laytonsville, Greater Gaithersburg that includes the City of Gaithersburg and the Town of Washington Grove, Shady Grove, Goshen and Montgomery Village.

Some of Lisa's areas of responsibility include working with the City of Gaithersburg on issues related to a proposed day laborer center and obtaining community input and monitoring issues related to the Shady Grove Sector plan and the agricultural reserve in Laytonsville. She puts her multicultural and bilingual



skills to good use in working with the diverse communities in Upcounty. "Lisa provides exemplary customer service and is very creative in her approaches," says Matthews.

Lisa grew up in what would be considered a typical Chinese American family. Being in the restaurant business, Lisa's parents moved around to pursue business opportunities and to provide the best educational opportunities for Lisa and her older sister Lily. Her parents instilled a strong sense of academic excellence and commitment to community service.

Lisa was born in New York and lived in Missouri and Tennessee before her family moved to rural northeastern North Carolina. The Lees were the only Asian Americans in the area, which made the family the cultural ambassadors to everything Chinese or Asian. The occasional sense of isolation and dealing with racial discrimination strengthened the family and fueled Lisa's desire to learn and appreciate the cultural backgrounds of other families. Lisa is also grateful for the warmth and friendship of many of her neighbors and classmates in North Carolina.

What may not be so typical was Lisa joining the cheerleading squad in high school and serving as squad captain during her junior and senior years. Always comfortable in leadership positions, Lisa was also president of her school's Junior Optimist Club.

After high school, Lisa worked in hotel management while attending college. Lisa holds two degrees, one in elementary education from North Carolina Wesleyan College and the second in business management from the University of Maryland. Having always worked full time while attending school part time, Lisa is now finishing a Master's degree in Strategic Organization Development at Johns Hopkins University. She is also a participant in the County's new Manager Development Program.

A contradiction to some, but Lisa Lee proudly views herself as a contemporary Asian American woman firmly rooted in traditional family values. In fact, she sees no contradiction in this at all but recognizes that this is the trend of the future for many Americans: comfortable with traditional values while forging a dynamic and new identity for the world of the 21st Century.

For more information about services in the Upcounty area, call (240) 777-8000 or visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/upcounty.

Black History Month Events

February is celebrated nationwide as Black History Month. County Executive Douglas M. Duncan will be sponsoring the annual Black History Month Celebration on Tuesday, February 7 at 7:00 p.m. in the Lobby Auditorium in the Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville. This year, the event will pay tribute to the legacy of civil rights pioneer Mrs. Rosa Parks, whose courage in fighting government sponsored racial discrimination in the 1950s changed the course of history. For more information, call Christina Clarke at (240) 777-2523.

The Department of Public Libraries is hosting numerous events at library branches throughout the month to help educate residents on the history, culture and contributions made by African Americans. Call (240) 777-2500 or visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov for library branch locations.

February 1, Wednesday – Silver Spring Library's African American book discussion group meets at 7 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month. On Feb. 1, the discussion will be on *Is Bill Cosby Right?: Or Has the Black Middle Class Lost Its Mind?*

February 4, Saturday – local author Anthony Cohen will be at Wheaton Library to talk about his ancestor who escaped to Canada via the Underground Railroad. Event at 2 p.m. is for the whole family.

February 9, Thursday – Twinbook Library hosts performance at 7 p.m. by 2nd Story Duo, a West African band, with authentic hand percussion instruments. For the entire family.

February 11, Saturday – Baba Jamal Koram, a griot (or storyteller/historian), will share stories for the family at the Aspen Hill Library at 1p.m. Crafts, a readathon and Underground Railroad activities are also featured.

February 22, Wednesday – Dr. Priscilla Ramsey from the Maryland Humanities Council will speak on John Edgar Wideman – the noted novelist, Rhodes Scholar and only writer awarded the PEN/Faulkner prize twice. Talk starts at 7 p.m. at Aspen Hill Library.

February 25, Saturday – at 2 p.m., Silver Spring Library presents "Reflecting Africa" by Soul in Motion Players, an African dance and drum ensemble. The riveting dance, drum and spoken word performance is for the whole family, age 5+.

February 25, Saturday – Back by popular demand to Montgomery County, Kensington Park Library presents an afternoon of music, dance and stories by the Erika Thimey Dance and Theater Company at 2 p.m. Fun for the entire family, age 2+.

February 28, Tuesday – Kenneth Lewis, Kensington Park Agency Head, discusses Francis Bok's *Escape from Slavery: The True Story of My Ten Years in Captivity - And My Journey to Freedom in America*. The 11 a.m. talk at the Kensington Park branch is for adults and older teens.

Senior Services from page 1

Language assistance is available for non-English speakers. The Senior Infoline TDD is (240) 777-4575.

Another resource for seniors and caregivers is the *Seniors' Resource Guide*, a joint publication between Aging and Disabilities Services and *Senior Beacon*, a monthly newspaper providing information for seniors. The *Seniors' Resource Guide* is available online at www.seniorbeacon.com or by calling (301) 949-9766.

Seniors, persons with disabilities receiving Medicare or their caregivers who need information and counseling on Medicare's new prescription drug program can contact the County's Senior Health Insurance Counseling program at (301) 590-2819. The program is run by SHIP, the Senior Health Insurance Program.

The new prescription drug coverage began January 1 and is available to all individuals with Medicare. Staff and volunteers from the counseling program are also visiting sites around the County to provide assistance and answer questions.

When calling about the Medicare drug plan, individuals should have the following information available:

- A list of prescriptions, including the retail cost and dosage;
- The name and location of the pharmacy where they prefer to buy their prescriptions; and
- Details about any insurance policies they have besides Medicare - including any Medicare supplemental policies.

The Senior Health Insurance Counseling program is open Monday through Friday. When volunteers are helping other callers, individuals can leave a message and have their calls returned within 24 hours.

Office of Community Outreach
Offices of County Executive Douglas M. Duncan
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Calendar of Events

Following are some events of interest to the general public. All events are open to the public at no cost. Events requiring prior registration are noted.

Women's legislative Briefing – On Sunday, January 29, Montgomery County's Commission for Women hosts the 2006 Women's Legislative Briefing from 12:30 to 4 p.m. at the National 4-H Conference Center, 7100 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, Maryland. Call (240) 777-8330 or visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw for more information or to register. **Registration requested.**

Day of Dialogue – The Washington Region for Justice and Inclusion sponsors its annual Media and Community Day of Dialogue for all communities to hold frank discussions to promote equality, understanding and respect for all. Event is on Friday, March 31 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, 777 North Capitol St, NE, Washington, DC. Registration required. Call (301) 650-2436 or visit www.openingminds.org.

Voter Registration Drives – Eligible citizens can register to vote during normal business hours at the Board of Elections, 751 Twinbrook Parkway in Rockville. Call (240) 777-VOTE (-8683) for more information. On Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. during the months of February and March, the BOE will also register voters at library branches around the County. Demonstrations will also be conducted on use of the new voting machines. For more information, call Dr. Gilberto Zelaya at (240) 777-8532 or contact your local library branch.

Lunar New Year celebration – Marking the coming of the Year 4704, the Year of the Dog, the Chinese Culture and Community Service Center hosts the annual Lunar New Year celebration at Lake Forest Mall in Gaithersburg. Event is on Saturday, January 28 at 12 noon. Call (240) 631-1200 or visit www.ccacc-dc.org for more information.